

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 03635 231236Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4377

INFO USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CZ

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK TREATMENT OF US JOURNALISTS

1. DURING DECEMBER 21 CALL ON MFA SIXTH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY, DCM NOTED THAT NY TIMES CORRESPONDENT DAVID ANDELMAN MAY SOON VISIT PRAGUE AND, RECALLING EARLY 1977 HARASSMENT AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EMPHASIZED USG CONCERN THAT SUCH PRACTICES CEASE. DCM ESPECIALLY CRITICIZED THE EFFORT OF GOC TO OBLIGE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, AS A PRECONDITION TO THEIR RECEIVING VISAS, TO PROMISE NOT TO SEE CHARTER 77 ADHERENTS.

2. ZANTOVSKY ATYPICALLY BRISTLED IN REPLYING THAT
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 03635 231236Z

"AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA" BUT ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT ON CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION IN A BALANCED MANNER, NOTING "MANY EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THIS COUNTRY" IN ADDITION TO PROBLEM AREAS. HE SAID THAT IF AMERICAN REPORTERS VISIT PRAGUE ONLY TO SEARCH OUT "SO-CALLED DISSIDENTS, OF WHICH THERE ARE NOT SO MANY" THEN

THEY MAY HAVE TO EXPECT SOME DIFFICULTIES IN REACTION.

3. DCM REJOINED THAT CONTINUATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK HARASSMENT AND EFFORTS TO STRICTLY CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF VISITING AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH CREATION OF PRECONDITIONS TO VISA ISSUANCE, COULD NOT HELP BUT ELICIT STRONG ADVERSE REACTION IN WASHINGTON AND IN US PRESS.

BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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